



Cancer Research Center Hotline

Hawaii Society of Clinical Oncology

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The Hawaii Society of Clinical Oncology (HSCO) is a not for profit organization founded in 1996, in order to advance the quality of oncology care across the State of Hawaii. The HSCO is intended to provide a forum for all physicians interested in oncology to share their common concerns, and to act as a vehicle for discussions on oncology practices, continuing education, and access to quality oncology care.

What initially began as a small group of concerned oncology specialists, meeting bright and early on Saturday mornings, the HSCO has blossomed and flourished. I am proud to serve as the new president of HSCO.

As the first President of the HSCO, Dr. Carl Higuchi was instrumental in providing the foundation, the insight, and the direction to this society. The HSCO was ushered into the new millenium under the auspices of Dr. Laeton Pang, whose tireless and energetic demeanor was able to foster the growth of this society. His hard work, dedication, and devotion provided strong leadership to the HSCO.

Currently the Hawaii Society of Clinical Oncology is comprised of a membership of 76 health care professionals, including 48 physicians. This diversified membership, including those from neighbor islands, incorporates medical doctors, registered nurses, oncology nurses, masters of public health, pharmacists, researchers, research workers, and geneticists in the Hawaii Society of Clinical Oncology.

HSCO strives to be identified as the voice of Hawaii's oncologists to promote quality oncology care through patient advocacy, continuing medical education, multidisciplinary engagement, and participation in the public forum.

The goals of the HSCO are to advance quality oncology care across Hawaii, provide a forum for all physicians interested in oncology to share their common concerns, and to act as a vehicle for discussions on oncology practice, continuing education, and reimbursement issues.

The HSCO hopes to promote grassroots advocacy programs, identify future leaders of this society, and provide a forum for discussion on clinical trial legislation. The HSCO hopes to respond to the legislative and the regulatory concerns of the membership, to enhance continuing medical education for membership, and to enhance communication within the membership.

The HSCO is coordinated through its affiliation with the Association of the Community Cancer Centers (ACCC). In addition, this society is affiliated with national organizations including the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and the Council of Associated Regional Radiation Oncology Societies (CARROS). Here at home, in the 50th state the HSCO works closely with the

Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Cancer Care in Hawaii as well as with the Hawaii Medical Association.

One of the major purposes of the HSCO is to help guide our state senators and members of Congress, in understanding the concerns of the oncology communities within the State of Hawaii. We have been in communication with Senators Akaka and Inouye as well as Congresswoman Mink and Congressman Abercrombie. The HSCO is opposed to the healthcare financing administration (HCFA) regarding possible cuts in reimbursement for cancer therapies applying payment caps to cancer drugs. The society is deeply concerned that cancer patients in the State of Hawaii have access to Medicare payments for certain drugs including all new oral anticancer therapies. Additional legislative issues that the HSCO is working on are the ambulatory payment classifications (APC) and average whole sale price (AWP) of chemotherapy agents. The HSCO is deeply concerned that reduction and reimbursement for chemotherapy acquisition without accompanying increases in chemotherapy administration threatens patient's access to newer agents in quality of care. In this regard, the HSCO, in association with ACCC, is working to educate Congress on this issue. The Hawaii Society of Clinical Oncology is also actively involved in the Medicare carrier advisory committees, as well as providing input to the proposed revisions to regulations to medical privacy.

Benefits of belonging to the HSCO:

- Improved community cancer care by implementing present knowledge and technology related to cancer detection, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation so that it is made available to the greatest number of cancer patients possible;
- Representation at Medicare carrier advisory committee meetings;
- Up-to-date communications with members on issues affecting patients' access to cancer care and the practice of oncology;
- Scientific and economic educational meetings;
- Leadership and networking opportunities;
- Quarterly state oncology society newsletter;
- ACCC bimonthly italics for oncology issues;
- Compendia-based drug bulletin;
- Answers to coding and reimbursement questions via the reimbursement hotline and state society website;
- Representation at ACCC president's retreat;
- Representation at ACCC radiation oncology policy institute;
- Representation af ASCO's clinical practice committee meetings.

The HSCO works in partnership with the Cancer Research Center of Hawaii (CRCH) to assure that its members are kept abreast of the latest cancer research findings on a national and local level as well as to provide valuable educational opportunities. As a HSCO partner, a goal of the Cancer Research Center is to conduct translational research that transfers the results of laboratory research to the clinical research setting with the expectation of improving the quality of cancer care delivered to the patients of Hawaii. Through its Clinical Sciences Program, the Cancer Center conducts approximately 150 clinical trials which are available to all eligible cancer patients.

As president of the HSCO, I would like to help the society encourage its membership to enroll their patients in the multitude of clinical trials available through the CRCH and other statewide

institutions. I currently also serve as the Hawaii State Chairman for the American College of Surgeons Cancer Liaison program for the Commission on Cancer. I will continue to provide the hospitals and the State of Hawaii, the HSCO, and the CRCH with new research protocols available through the American College of Surgeon Oncology Group. I also plan to share with the society, new legislative efforts for the American College of Surgeons as well access to the National Cancer database which can compare the results of site specific cancer care therapy in the State of Hawaii with the national benchmark standards of the mainland.

This year the HSCO, in conjunction with the American Cancer Society and other statewide organizations, plans to support legislation to make the State Capital a smoke free building. We also support legislation to make tobacco sales to minors a mandatory offense with a fine. We will continue to support the utilization of tobacco settlement dollars going to the Hawaii Tobacco Prevention and Control Trust Fund.

In closing, as you can see there is a distinctive collaborative pattern between the practitioners of oncology care, the HSCO and the CRCH. Together, we plan to advance quality of oncology care for the patients in the State of Hawaii.

For your information

The Hawaii Society of Clinical Oncology annual meeting will be held on November 23, 2002 at the Shriner's Hospital for Children. Dr. Joseph Bailes, Chief Public Policy Liaison for the American Society of Clinical Oncology, will join us again as a guest speaker. In addition, Mr. Ricky Newton, Certified Public Accountant will provide a presentation to update the membership on the topic of "Cost accounting for the oncology practice". For more information visit the HSCO website: hscowhawaii.com. Visit www.crch.org for more information about the Cancer Research Center of Hawaii.

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